

draft **CONCEPT NOTE**

THEMATIC WORKSHOP on MIGRATION, CONNECTIVITY and BUSINESS

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Unlike in the recent decades, ‘connectivity’ has emerged as the defining feature within the globalised and multi-connected world. Across the regions, countries have been witnessing numerous connectivity initiatives emerging, in many forms.

2 Connectivity, in theory and practice, has evolved considerably. In very limited cases, it is about collaboration on development of hardcore physical connectivity (*multimodal transport, energy, etc.*). In most cases, a wider articulation of connectivity¹ is envisaged, in terms of connecting and creating bridges: towards developing understanding among and within societies; nurturing ideas and knowledge; promoting culture and related heritage; advancing peoples’ interaction among and within sub-region(s); propagation of science-technology-innovation. Over the past decade, for instance, this has been evident across Asia and the Pacific region.

3 The development of the connectivity frameworks are most often viewed as deepening of multifarious links, networks to facilitate economic interactions. In that context, the primary objective is to facilitate movement of cargo and passengers. In a wider context, strengthened connectivity is ultimately to enhance economic gains for stakeholders. Evidence and analyses demonstrate that wider connectivity facilitates all forms of economic engagements and business i.e. trade facilitation. Irrespective of the thrust or modalities for connectivity, contemporary connectivity frameworks/ platforms also aim at contributing to sustained, inclusive growth and sustainable development of people. Within an emerging discourse of connectivity and business, particularly in the context burgeoning Global Supply Chain centric global trading across a range of manufacturing industry, the connectivity frameworks /arrangements are premised on a set of principles i.e. mutual interest and benefit, sharing of benefits.

4 Contemporary connectivity discourse places ‘people’ at the centre. 2030 Agenda puts it most aptly. In order to materialize that, it is expected that connectivity within and among economies would be preceded by connecting the communities and wider societies in all possible forms. This is also in keeping with ‘inclusion’ in all aspects - social, cultural, economic or, political. In turn, the ‘connects’ at different tiers and forms should also contribute to

¹ Ref. Declaration: the Fourteenth SAARC Summit (*New Delhi, 2007*)

building pluralistic and harmonious society. As much as societies should take advantage of increased connectivity, multi-layered connectivity should also accentuate drawing societies closer and more inclusive. In the process, societies should be flexible enough to appreciate the need for inclusion and be founded upon respect for people of diverse origin, background, etc.

5 In order for economies to tap desired benefits and economic gains within deeply connected region or sub-region, each connected society should possess orientation and capacity to welcome people from diverse location/origin, background and also appreciate contribution of other peoples. Contribution made by those people can only be sustainable and beneficial in the long run when it is coupled with securing dignity, well-being and economic gains for all people – irrespective of their origin, circumstances, etc. It assumes mutual trust and mutual respect on all sides.

6 Approached in terms of a wider matrix in contemporary trends of globalisation, connectivity menu is expected to contribute to further mobility of all economic inputs and factors and to facilitate efficient interfacing of various processes of production and also segments within regional and global value chains. This is particularly emphasized increasingly by global business. Because, in order for global business to be local and prosper in diverse social, cultural and economic setting, the business recognizes the importance of acquiring necessary social and cultural capital. And, that happens best when people have corresponding degree of mobility in mutual interest. Today, global business recognizes and thrives on the value of sourcing of people from diverse background, capabilities, skills.

7 It is in such a context that deeper and sustainable mobility of people and their social and cultural capital to meet the increasing necessity of mobility of people is viewed. Clearly, connectivity frameworks /initiatives need to be as much as for growth-centricity as also for attainment of peace and stability within countries and around. This is demonstrated by the experiences across connectivity initiatives. Perhaps, this is aptly demonstrated in the Asia-Pacific region which sees plethora of connectivity initiatives, of diverse natur/form.

8 Eventually, deepening connectivity is seen to provide a vehicle towards contributing to economic integration among the sub-regions. Countries are increasingly forming /joining sub-regional/regional trading arrangements (RTAs) – not just for trade in goods or services, but also for overall social and economic development and greater cohesion and harnessing synergies in those sub-regions/regions². In the process, the Asia-Pacific region for instance has seen emergence of largest number of regional cooperative mechanisms /arrangements.

9 In that context, as wider connectivity strives to enhance people's social and economic development, it is fitting to weigh as to how the connectivity initiatives and the RTAs further facilitate business and also needed mobility of people. There is a growing view for the RTAs or

² These are found to be for pursuing the common objectives i.e. ending poverty and hunger, attaining food security, ensuring energy security, provisioning social (health-education) goods, addressing environmental challenges, augmenting productive capacity (across sectors), securing availability of and access to knowledge-technology-experience-information.

similar frameworks to look at mobility aspects anew. This has so far not been adequately envisaged within existing economic models. Emerging demographics across different regions/sub-regions, for instance, would ask for corresponding mobility of people.

Guiding questions ...

- *How can deepening connectivity further contribute to dignity and mutual respect among cultures while pursuing collaboration on migration and mobility?*
- *How can we advance 'mobility' as a necessary component of connectivity?*
- *How can mobility contribute to 'Development', in particular advance attainment of the SDGs at national level?*
- *How can the existing Regional Trading Agreements (RTAs) further advance mobility of people?*
- *How can we consider development of common bilateral /regional templates on mobility (including labour migration)?*
- *What best practices can be cited where connectivity facilitates better understanding of diversity – cohesion which is crucial for mobility/migration?*
- *How can mobility, within wider connectivity, address people's marginalization and vulnerability?*
- *What innovative, more responsive or, better functioning connectivity institutions / mechanisms at national /sub- regional can be envisaged?*
